



## July 13, Vacation Bible School Series

### Jesus Forgives Me

Luke 19:1-10 (ESV) He entered Jericho and was passing through. **2** And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. **3** And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature. **4** So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. **5** And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.” **6** So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. **7** And when they saw it, they all grumbled, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.” **8** And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.” **9** And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. **10** For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

*Zacchaeus was a wee little man, and a wee little man was he  
He climbed up in a Sycamore tree, for the Lord he wanted to see  
And as the Savior passed that way, he looked up in the tree  
And he said, “Zacchaeus, you come down!”  
For I’m going to your house today, for I’m going to your house today.*

Big ideas in the children’s song today:

## 1. Zac was little. (*Zacchaeus was a wee little man...*)

- Luke gives us other details about Zacchaeus:

### ***He was “Chief”***

- Zacchaeus was a “chief” tax collector. He would organize all the other tax collectors and bring in healthy commissions in this kind of position.
- Luke flat out tells us, “he’s rich.”

### ***He lived in Jericho***

- Jericho was one of the most wealthy cities in Palestine. Tax income would be extensive.

### ***He was a cheater***

- In vs 8 Zac says, if I have defrauded anyone. But what it means is “since” I have defrauded people. He’s admitting his fraud.
- Zacchaeus was greedy...and everyone knew it.

### ***He was despised***

- Verse 7 hints that everyone knew Zacchaeus, and look what they call him: a sinner. It’s the most derogatory label they could give him.

### ***He was short!***

- Luke says, “he was small in stature” If you had height and weight tables for the Mediterranean during this time, the averages put Zacchaeus at less than 5 feet tall.
- It’s his smallness that sticks with us. There’s a reason.
- With care not to allegorize his stature: Zacchaeus was short in more ways than just physical height. He was short because he didn’t measure up.
- He’s short. Short in height, but just as short in ethics, in relationships, in character, in acceptance, in love. He’s a man who has everything. But he’s so short, that he has nothing.

## 2. Zac was up a tree. (*He climbed up in a Sycamore tree...*)

- Why did he climb a tree? He wanted to see ***who Jesus was***. That’s way different than just seeing Jesus.
- You can be up a tree in more ways than just being up a tree. Zacchaeus was.
- Zacchaeus would have been in the position to explore in full, everything this world has to offer, but in the chase, he finds that nothing in this world satisfied him like he thought it would.

*“Most people, if they had really learned to look into their own hearts, would know that they do want, and want acutely, something that cannot be had in this world. There are all sorts of things in this world that offer to give it to you, but they never quite keep their promise.*

*The longings which arise in us when we first fall in love, or first think of some foreign country, or first take up some subject that excites us, are longings which no marriage, no travel, no learning, can really satisfy. I am not now speaking of what would be ordinarily called unsuccessful marriages, or holidays, or learned careers. I am speaking of the best possible ones. There was something we grasped at, in that first moment of longing, which just fades away in the reality. [...] The wife may be a good wife, and the hotels and scenery may have been excellent, and chemistry may be a very interesting job: but something has evaded us.”*

—C.S. Lewis

- ***Zac was drawn to Jesus by the severe mercy of dissatisfaction.***

- Zac could have said...no way I'm climbing up a tree. What he was in search of was more important than a little indignity.
- Do you want to see who Jesus really is? You're going to have to climb a few trees.
- That's what Zacchaeus did, but he did it to get a look at Jesus. *I need to know who he is.*

### **3. Zac had to come down.** (*Zacchaeus, you come down...*)

- As Jesus passes by, he stops, he looks up in the tree, he sees Zacchaeus, and he calls out to him.
- Jesus did not use derogatory terms applied to hated publicans...but called Zac by name. When Jesus uses your name? It changes you forever.
- He says to Zacchaeus: “Come down”
- He says: “*I must stay at your house.*”
- This scene is a thumbnail of why Jesus came from heaven to the earth at all.
- Jesus said it this way in Luke 5:31-32 - “It's not those who are well who need a doctor, but the sick. I've not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”
- Here in verse 10: “*For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.*”
- Notice this about the exchange here: Zacchaeus does not say, “Lord, I'd like to invite you into my life.” Instead, Jesus says, “Zacchaeus, here I come.” You don't need to work to scratch and claw your way to me...I'm going to come to you.
- Religion is, “I have to be good enough and strong enough and jump high enough to reach out to God.”
- But the Gospel is that Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. The gospel is that God reaches out to us and says, “I'm here for you. I see you. You're a moral failure. But I'm here to bring you salvation. All you have to do is come down from your tree and welcome me in.”
- He did. Zach came down from his tree and welcomed the Savior into his life. Jesus says

two incredible things about that:

1) **“Today salvation has come to this house...”**

- Christianity is the only way that can say, salvation has come. HAS. As in, it is DONE.
- Wherever Jesus is, there is salvation.

2) Jesus calls Zacchaeus, a **“Son of Abraham”**

- It means that Zac exercised the same kind of faith that Abraham did.
- A person is not saved by a good heritage, or condemned by a bad one.
- Here’s what we know of this Son of Abraham: Zacchaeus lived the rest of his life devoted to his Savior. There are texts written by Clement that tell us that Zacchaeus later became the bishop of Caesarea. The swindler became a servant. A leader in the church.
- He was the littlest man, but he became one of the biggest because of Jesus. Because he came down.

A great way to sum this story up:

Zac was short...so am I.

Zac was up a tree...so am I.

Zac had to come down...so will I.

- There is no one here today who is not little. There is no one here today who sin’t up a tree. And there’s no one here today who can’t come down. Jesus wants to come in to your life.
- He’s inviting himself into your heart today! But it is only you that can let them in.

*The Savior is waiting to enter your heart, why don’t you let him come in?*

*There’s nothing in this world to keep you apart, what is your answer to him.*

*Time after time he has waited before, and now he is waiting again.*

*To see if you’re willing to open the door, oh won’t you let him come in.*